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A BOOKLET *of* VERSE

By

James E. McDade





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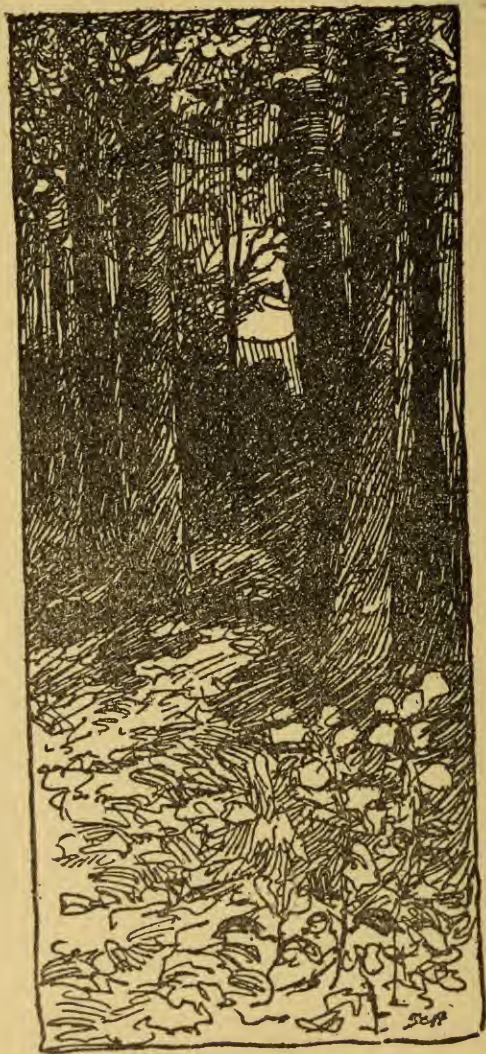
A BOOKLET *of* VERSE

By

James E. McDade



The Rogerson Press, Chicago





THE HOUSE OF DREAMS.



H, far away, there's a House of Dreams, at the
foot of a fairy hill,

Where the fairies danced in the days of old; and
the fairies dance there still,

For whoso follows the fairy path can join in their
joy once more

As the moonlight dapples the silver sward, and slants through
the open door.

And where can we find the moonlit path that winds to the
fairy hill?

'Twas the way we walked in the days of old, and we fain
would follow it still;

And now we have wandered as wide as earth, where the sun in
its splendor gleams,

But the noon has hidden the moonlit path that holds to the
House of Dreams!

We will turn from the noon to the violet glade where plays
wee Dimplekin,

And we'll follow her dance to the Hidden Gate, stoop low, and
enter in,

And then once more by the musk-rose path, where the fadeless
moonlight beams,

To the long-lost hill of the Heart's Desire, and the fairy House
of Dreams!



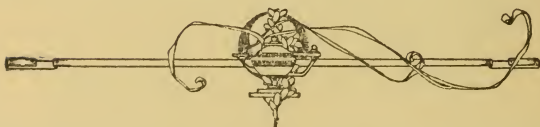
BY MOONLIGHT.




WEIRD tonight on the woodland
Shadows lie,
Black as the boughs above us
On the sky.
Over us, like dread phantoms
Of the wood,
Darkly the fearsome shadows
Seem to brood.

Yet from the heart of the woodland
Dim and lone
Comes the fresh breath of blossoms
Lightly blown,
And through the elm trees rising
Dark and tall
Streams the soft autumn moonlight
Over all.

So as we wait here watching
Moonbeams play,
All the dim fear of the forest
Fades away,
As a sad minor cadence
On the ear
Melts to a golden major
Full and clear.



THE CHOICE.

“ HE board, your majesty, is spread
With nectar-blooded fruits, and cream,
And gustful fowl, and snowy bread,
And all the dainties gormands dream.
The guests are gathered, prince and peer,
And they that keep earth's hoards of gold;
Momentous names of fame and fear,
And lordly crests renowned of old.”

King Merriment, the debonair,
Looked greatly bored, it seemed to me.
“Affairs of the state demand my care,
Affairs of state—in Arcady.”

And then another: “At our board
Nor crest nor gold, but only they
Who Fancy's empery have explored,
And Memory's glamoured reign survey;
And Beauty blithe as laughing June,
When from the splendor of her wing
She flashes over dell and dune
A flood of raptured blossoming.”

King Merriment no longer frowned.
“That's not so trite!” he cried in glee.
“Yes, yes! Of course I'll be around,
For that's just like my Arcady!”



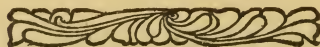
A PARTING.



THE road's at parting!
Henceforward, shade or sun,
Our ways no more are one,
But lead afar.
What fortune shall attend
Our steps beyond the bend?
Where lies the journey's end?
Under what star?

Turn for a moment
Here, where the paths divide;
Look back across the wide
Slopes that were ours.
All the rough, stubborn ways
Soften in sunset rays
Until our lingering gaze
Finds only flowers.

The road's at parting!
Hands clasp, and brimming eyes
Search new, dim heights that rise
Rainbowed in tears.
May those far hills prove green,
Fruitful the vales between,
With harvest gold to glean
Through golden years!



A WHITE ROSE.



MY white, white rose, you unfolded fair
In the silver gleam of the dawn!
You bloomed to my heart like an angel's smile,
That glimmers, and then is gone.

But the white of your bloom, and the silver dawn
No more my rapt soul knows,
And to-night, ah me! in my heart of hearts
I weep o'er a blood-red rose.

To my red, red rose in the dusk I cling,
But I'm dreaming o'er and o'er
A dream of a dawn and a white, white rose
That shall bloom for me nevermore!

A BIRTHDAY SONG.



HIGH summer's fairest tufts of bloom
The streamlet's shore are wreath-
ing;
The blossoms' balmiest perfume
From out the woods is breathing.

The robin sings beside the lane,
The fields are rich with roses;
The sloping sweep of amber grain
Its wealth of gold discloses.

Fair omens be the robin's song
And roses' soft perfuming;
And in fair blossomed fields full long
Thy years to match their blooming!

A SEPTEMBER GREETING.



SEE how the smiling fields are all a-gold,
And how the wild rose lingers by the stream;
Yet by yon sun-flushed hillside's purple gleam
What wealth of mellow fruitage is foretold!
September's dower is ever to behold

Bloom blend with harvest; happily to dream
Bright blossom-visions; richly to redeem
Their promise in fulfillment manifold.

Be thine her gifts,—not May-time tints alone,
And cloying flowers, but all the deeper dyes
Of earnest life's rich purple, red, and gold;
So dream and doing,—bud and rose full-blown,—
Unfold for thee beneath September skies
A story fair as poet ever told.

FELLOWSHIP.



THE castled hill of dreams is rich with all
The splendor of sunset, seen on summer
eves,
When many a crag of crimson proudly
heaves

Its head to dizzy deeps of calm, where hall,
And gorgeous gate, and tower of flame enthral
The vision, till the exultant heart conceives
The dazzle of a destiny that reprieves
The ache of arid years. But when each wall
And glowing turret of the castled west
Is glassed in some clear woodland lake, the eyes
Turn from the sky's imperial blazonry
And on its mild reflection fondly rest.
So my dream-castles, proudly though they rise,
Are fairer still when mirrored, friend, in thee.

LITTLE HEAD OF CURLS.



Y drowsy little Head of Curls,
The firelight shadows peep,
So fold your eyes, and nestle close,
And sleep, my blossom, sleep.

The meadow flowers are drooping, dear,
The hills are faint and far,
The lily in the garden, dear,
Is dreaming of its star.

The great wind blows across the tide,
And murmurs in the trees,
And sings my drowsy Head of Curls
Its drowsy melodies.

And sings away, and far away,
Until upon my arm
My dearie's shining head of curls
Is cuddled close and warm.

My drowsy little Head of Curls,
The firelight shadows peep,
So fold your eyes, and nestle close,
And sleep, my blossom, sleep.



A SHRINE.



THOU hast my being, to its utmost bourne,
Its wastes and barren reaches, its benign
Green plots and bending fruitage, all are thine,
Save one sequestered solitude forlorn,
Where, overgrown with darnel, spurge, and thorn,
Lie the dim ruins of a broken shrine
I builded foolishly in the divine
Far dawn-flush of love's unforgotten morn.

Alone let me steal down that leafy glen
In the soft silver glooms of summer night,
And dream till those wrecked walls of chrysolite
Once more rise stately, and there lives again
The fairest vision that my life has known,—
For in that shrine the image is thine own.

TO THE LIGHT.



Sunset crimsoned all the hills with flame,
I walked the margin of the lonely sea
And watched the myriad wings that over
me
In from the gray and restless waters came
In search for rest. With weariness grown lame,
The pinions that had dared the immensity
Of ocean winds and spaces wild and free
Were furled now in forgetfulness. The same
Dark hour one bolder spirit winged her way
Out from the quiet hills, far out to sea,
By keener sight and truer instinct drawn,
For they see glory fade to ashen gray,
And watch the west as it grows dark, while she
Fares eastward all night long to meet the dawn.

LET ME FORGET.



LET me forget, when—as the fates decree—
Gray Time has laid his palsied hand on me,
The sunless paths of life, the days that knew
The thorn and thrall, when friends that proved
untrue

Chilled the warm pulse of youth to misery.

I shall be wearied then, and would not see
The ghosted past. O Time, I beg of thee,
Distill for me the poppy, not the rue!
Let me forget!

But the fair friendship that so tenderly
By look, and grasp, and heart's unspoken plea,
Once spanned my gloom-paths with an arch of blue,
Though memory each lost hour with tears bedew,
Spare this, O Time, nor through dim years to be
Let me forget!

SILENCE.



HAVE come uncomplaining through the
years,
The lonely years, and always I have kept
Locked in my heart the woe that never
slept.

Nor have I sought in cool, refreshing tears
Easement of anguish, nor reproached the spheres
That sent me sorrow. Slow the nights have stepped
In weary pace, and gray, cold dawns have crept
Up from their tombs, like ghosts of buried fears,
To find my lips, if white, yet silent still.
To-night I drain the dregs, and as I yearn
For light, only for light to know my breast,
Some sign to bless or blame my tortured will,
A knell seals up the years. At last I learn,
Ah, bitterness! to know, silence was best.

WITH A MANUSCRIPT.



LET those who love the easeful paths of writ
Not stay to trace the plot that twists and twines
Through this rude labyrinth of limping lines.
(Not all a-limp? Well, even if we admit
Some steadier steps, it matters not a whit.)

Let such, I say, seek elsewhere for the signs
Of mossy ways enchanting, roofed with vines.
Tangled this maze; but you have threaded it,
With faithful Tessie, Grace, and all the rest,
A goodly troop; and in the magic glass
The old witch Memory bears, you may behold
King, prince and court, or fairies moon-caressed;
And as in royal pomp the pictures pass,
The labyrinth's dull walls shall turn to gold.

STAR TO STAR.



HAT mysteries has heaven not revealed
To childish eyes upraised in wonderment,
Of silver seas and splendors orient,
Or happy skies from duller sight concealed!
The skies of earliest dawn are wont to yield

The richest glories of the firmament,
And youthful day's first glance is upward bent
To rest in rapture on the starry field.

But constellation's beam and morn's sweet rose
Shall fade, like lights of home upon the sight
Of one whose weary feet must wander far.
Hot sun-glare then on him that tills and sows,
And toils all day for harvest all too light,—
Then soft home-lights again, and gloaming star!

AT CHRISTMAS.




IN gracious Christmas dusk the ember light
Glow with a softer radiance than before
When it but glints the links of golden ore
That bind us—do they not?—across the night.
It's long, to-night, this chain, and yet so bright

And tuneful-tinkling that we'll not deplore
The distance and the dusk, finding such store
Of precious heart's-gold glimmering on our sight.

Let me make highway of its shining track
To bear to you the season's greetings duly,
Each word an eager moonshine-winged fairy
Staggering beneath good wishes on his back,
Stuttering a bit, (to represent me truly),
But all intoning: "Be your Christmas merry!"

A CHORD.

"OLLY, holly, red and green,
On the white of Christmas snow,
Tell me what your tints may mean,
What the largess you bestow?"

"Green for glory of the spring,
Red for autumn's ripe increase,
White, the gleam of angel's wing,
Wafting innocence and peace."

Turn each color into tone:
Let that golden chord sublime,
On the Christmas breezes blown,
Peal for you a Christmas chime!

IN MAY.



HE old earth dreams young dreams today, her
care
Forgot. The bending heavens of tranquil blue
Smile as they smiled on worlds created new.
Down emerald fields the warm and tender air
From wakening bough and blossom seems to bear
The dewy fragrance and the living hue
Of memoried years, and from the past to woo
The fresh first glance, that found life all so fair.

And so each tint that glows in grove or sky,
Each liquid bird-note's silvery, quivering tone,
And every odorous breath from herb and flower
Gathers a sweetness from the days gone by.
The heart reaps harvests vanished years have sown,
And lives a golden age in one brief hour.

LINES ON A LOVING CUP.



O longer Hera's daughter, ever young,
From vine-clad Phlius brings immortal
wine,
And brims the glowing cup for them that
that dine
On high Olympus; and no more among
The gods the cup-bearer from Phrygia sprung
Sweeps, radiant as a star, on the divine
Plumes of Jove's eagle, to dispense the fine
Ambrosial essence, as old poets sung.

Hebe and Ganymede have passed; but Love,
The true immortal, pours a sparkling draught,
More sweet than on Olympus e'er was quaffed,
Pure as the crystal drops that from above
Distill at dawn upon the wilding rose,
Life of life's joy, and Lethe of life's woes.

RONDEAU TO A MULE.

WEATHERWISE AND OTHERWISE.



THOU mule barometer, so weatherwise,
Thine auguries how fervently I prize
When down the radiant east the brand of
day
Sets all the hills aflame, and when the way
Far-luring, fresh, and fair before me lies
To where sequestered nooks and sapphire skies
Hold my heart spelled, and charm my admiring eyes.
Thine image then is fair, and sweet thy bray,
Thou mule barometer.

But when the rain-slushed road contrives to rise
Beyond profanity, and never dries,—
With heaven's great hose in a perennial spray,
And all my togs in soggy disarray,—
Thine ugly shape how deeply I despise,
Thou mule barometer!

Blue Ridge Mts.

A SONNET TO ORDER.



VAUNT thee! jangling, crack-backed mandolin,
Nor let thy tinny racket vex me more!
Yet stay! thy riven ribs have tided o'er
One shattered promise, and thy stridulous din
I half excuse for that. But now I'm in
A prettier pickle than I was before,
For on me fair behest has fallen once more;
This time, to take my harp and try to win
To sonnet strains its silent slumbering strings.
I promised this? If so, that thing I wore
The other night,—that tissue-paper bonnet,—
Was dunce's crown, not thinking cap. This brings
My tender conscience well in sight of shore:
I've kept my word for once, and here's your sonnet!

ON ICY WAYS.



N icky ways, adown the street
I fain would walk with steps discreet,
Because I know my neighbor's eye
Is fastened on me as I try
To do my gracefulest, and cheat
His fiendish hope. In vain! I meet
An icy Waterloo of sleet,
And hear his laugh as low I lie
On icy ways.

Ah, why is mirth reserved to greet
The falling pilgrim, not the fleet?
I marvel much, and onward hie,
And rub my joints, and heave a sigh
For all that fare which fickle feet
On icy ways.

A PICTURE.



HERE, friend, you see the pictures I have brought
Back from my wanderings in the woodland
ways,
A summer's spoil, that to the eye conveys
Only a hint of all the marvels wrought
By lavish nature—dawns and sunsets shot
With crimson glory, birds on birchen sprays,
Lake-mirrored skies, with clouds that charm the gaze,
Or brooklets silvering many a woodland plot.
But this last picture, where a gray tent peeps
Through soft green foliage, like a thrush's nest,
Charms not so much by all the eyes behold
As by the inner sunshine that it keeps.
I think I like it more than all the rest—
Our "Hemlock Camp"—it's framed, you see, in gold.

A RED-LETTER DAY.



HAT have we here? Bless me, what do I read?

"Invited"—ah!—"the Auditorium"—

"A dinner party"—"will I try to come?"

Will I? And when did the poet ever need

A second bidding to a feast? Indeed,

Though cruel fate had left me deaf and dumb

And blind and lame, and every sense were numb,

I'd shout a "Yes!" and come with rocket speed.

So your baton extends its graceful sway

Above strange wondering faces; and new chords

Smite the dinned air as ours so often smote.

Another band of lutes and lyres to-day

Supplants us. Still, it certainly affords

Some comfort to receive that "bid" you wrote.

RONDEAU GASTRONOMIQUE.



Hungry Outing Club, from far away,

Where the gaunt mountains lift their crags of
gray,

Where silent stars across the cedars gleam,

And moonlight silvers Shenandoah's stream,

Greeting! and thanks that you should pause to pay

One kind remembrance when the hour was gay,

And on the snowy cloth before you lay

Sandwich and sauce, and salads rich as cream,—

Ah, happy outing club!

Might I have passed the weary miles that day

Between our hungry camp and your array

Of dainties fit to crown a camper's dream,

I'd wish it dark, to save me your esteem,

Then, m-m-m-m! what doings! but I fear you'd stay

A hungry outing club!

Fairfield, Va.

IN LITTLE.



ET me learn in little the lesson of all,
Let me learn of the rill how the river
flows,
Find the music of spheres in the robin's call,
And beauty's soul in the heart of a rose.

Let me learn in little the lesson of all;
Give me lowly life, not the ways of the great;
Let me pass by the proud in the palace hall
To kneel with the pilgrims before the gate.

Let me learn in little the lesson of all,
For sun, and star, and the sweep of spheres
Are mirrored in dewdrops as they fall,
And a sigh holds the secret of all earth's tears.

A CHRISTMASSE WYSSHE.



HOUGH violettes
Be under snowe,
Yette holly's greene
And backe-logges glowe;
For anciente booke
Recordes ye rule:
"Christmasse is heire
To joye of Yule."

Reverse ye texte!
(Forgive ye punne;)
I write ye wysshe
Not all in funne,
But with my jسته
In hearte's employe:
"That you'll be heire
To Christmasse joye."

BY THE CAMP FIRE.



HE camp fire through the forest gloom
Spreads radiance, like a rose in bloom.
The birches sleep, the waves are still,
No echo answers from the hill.

The pale smoke rises from the blaze
Like vapor through the silvery sprays,
Out through the darkness dim and far,
Lured by the light of some fair star.

So from the fires that haunt my heart
To-night what white dreams upward start,
And far through night's dim mystery
Like incense rise, my star, to thee!

THE SECRET.

("Spirit Guarding the Secret of the Tomb," by Saint Marceaux.)



H, spirit vigilant and stern,
Guarding the tomb,
Earth's restless children may not learn
The secret sealed within thine urn,
Of blight or bloom.

Is it too dread a mystery
For us to know?
Too deep a woe for such as we,
Or ecstasy too bright to be
Man's lot below?

Or dost thou over ashes blest
Thy vigil keep,
That time's rude echoes may molest
No more, or break the dreamless rest
Of them that sleep?

THE FAIRY POOL.



WHAT a web of wonder the child-heart weaves
By the fairy pool where the blue flags blow,
And what film-winged legions leap from the
leaves
In the enchanted haunts where its ripples
flow!

The wide unseen and the deep unheard
On its wavelets are ever a-dance in glee,
For the blue flags whisper the Secret Word,
And the fairy pool is as deep as the sea!

TO A SINGER.



marveled where the thrush
Had learned the wondrous art
That in day's fading flush
Led captive all my heart.

I marvel now no more
That music crowns him king;
He's singing o'er and o'er
The songs he heard you sing.

COUNTESS POTOCKA.



DEEP eyes like planets in the dusk,
Cheeks like the flushed auroral snows,
A spirit-face as sweet as musk,
And heart a snow-white cloistral rose.

A WISH.



IF I should versify my Christmas wishes,
I trust you'll deem them all the more auspicious;
They'll come the sooner, having many feet,
And lamest tunes, you know, are hard to beat.

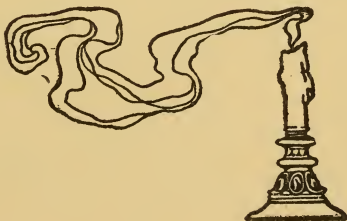
Now, rhymes are always better far than reasons,
So I'll ask the genius of this best of seasons
To ransack 'round from poles to the equator
For happy gifts, and picking out the greater,
(These genii, let me tell you, are good judges,)
Mix them just right, the way folks do with fudges.
With magic wand I'd have him stir the batter,
And then serve for you on a golden platter
That best of gifts within the ken of fairy:
A rollicking, old-fashioned Christmas merry!

A CHRISTMAS CANDLE.




LET me light a Christmas candle that shall flash
across the night
Greetings of the happy season in the glimmer of
its light.
Let it blossom into radiance, let it sparkle like a
star,

And beam to you a merry, merry Christmas from afar!



EX UMBRIS.

“ISCLOSE for me life's riddle,” once I cried,
High in the hopes of eager-soaring youth.
They brought me where a portal rose in
pride,
Inscribed in golden character: “Truth.”


Through it with folded eyes I went a-dream,
To where men sat and fashioned shapes of fear
By an inconstant firelight's flare and gleam,
Each one insistent crying: “Truth is here!”

And that dark vision were to me a doom,
Nor might I know the dream that never dies,
Had not a voice shot splendor through the gloom,
Stirred its deep shadows, and unsealed my eyes.

And then I knew the joy that haunts the hills.
I walked the wilderness, and faring on
Through storm and starlight, sought the light that fills
With plummy gold the radiant fields of dawn.

Silence can never claim the voice we hear
In melodies the winds and billows sing,
Nor shall that spirit fail the passing year
In all the sounds that all the seasons bring.

AN OLD SONG.

IPPLING chords from the piano—then an old
sweet plaintive song
Lays its spell upon the spirit, and the legioned
memories throng,
As the voice upon the bosom of the tide of music
seems

Sweeping out across the shadows that enfold the isle of
dreams,

Drifting through forgotten vistas on the billowed harmony
Like a gondola by moonlight slipping down a silver sea.

A SONNET DEFENSIVE



TILL you insist, and will not be denied:

Each heart must have its idol; what is mine?

But, why, I answer, must one lonely shrine

Hold all my homage, when the world is wide,

And manifold its beauty? Let me guide

Your steps to a rare garden where entwine

A hundred budded marvels that outshine

The hundred hues in which the morn is dyed.

Why pluck the rose, flushed with a timid dawn,

Or regal lily, proud in pearl and gold?

Eyebright and iris lure my footsteps on,

And hosts beside, with equal tints in dower.

With all so sweet, what wonder if I hold

The garden fairer than its fairest flower?

ABSENCE.



T thy castle window high

Why, my lady, dost thou sigh?

Moonlight silvers tower and tree,

Lattice shadows fall on thee.

Dreaming in the dark and dew,

Has thy heart its shadows too?

At thy castle window high

Why, my lady, dost thou sigh?

Suns must set, and souls must part,

Night and absence chill the heart.

When the hues of sunset fail,

Comes the pensive moonlight pale;

So across thy dreary dream

Plaintive memory's silver gleam.

Suns must set, and souls must part,

Night and absence chill the heart.

WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW.



WHEN lights are low, and gaudy day
Forbears to flaunt her colors gay,
When strident cares have winged their flight
Like clamorous crows at fall of night,
How nimble fancies dance away
To bloom and bird-song, love and May!
So fairies frolic in the play
And weave sweet plots for our delight
When lights are low.

So in life's twilights chill and gray,
As embers fade to hopeless clay,
Frail Fancy's wand dispels the blight,
And radiant points the enraptured sight
Where lilies bloom, and love holds sway,
When lights are low.

STELLA INERRANS.



WHEN, far astray, the lonely traveler fares
At dusk to where grim shaggy cliffs uprise
And plunge their sable peaks in darkening
skies,
His weary soul the gloom around him shares,
And, all unsteadfast, now no longer dares.
But when in heaven's bewildering maze his eyes
Search out the unmoving star, he knows where lies
His home, his pathway, and no more despairs.
A quick drawn breath of waking ecstasy,
The glow and flush of inner life new-dawned,
And once again the rugged way seems sweet.
And so may I, when shades encompass me,
Raise trustful eyes to one clear Light beyond,
Then follow through the night with willing feet.

A HUNTING SONG.



HE blossom's on the heather,
There's dew on waste and moor,
There's rapture in the weather,
The steeds are swift and sure.

The wild red deer is bounding
As shrilling of the horn
From grove and glen resounding
Across the hills is borne.

The crimson east is gleaming
On hill and flood and field,
And who will stay for dreaming
When huntsman's horn has pealed?

Let lord and lady follow
The sweetly-shrilling horn,
While many an answering hollo
Across the hills is borne.

A MADRIGAL.



HE sun has tangled his gold in your hair,
And summer has searched her skies
To find you the blue that is glowing there
In the living light of your eyes.

My heart well knows why the sun gave you gold,
And June brought her skies of blue,
But the best it can bring is the tale half-told
In this little song for you!



THE MEADOW DAISY.



HERE'S a great red rose in the garden, dear,
And the tall white lilies their charms unfold,
But no flower to me is so sweet, my dear,
As the meadow daisy with heart of gold.

For the warm, red roses are vain, my dear,
And the tall, white lilies are proud and cold,
And my heart blooms down in the meadow, dear,
By the little daisy with heart of gold.

A SPINNING SONG.



VER the wheel goes round
Soft and low, with droning sound,
Seems to sing the self-same song:
"What to me is right or wrong?

"Alike is day or year,
Guilt or glory, smile or tear;
Yours to shape the flying thread
Ere the distaff's wealth be sped."

Ever the spindle hums;
Down the glistening fiber comes,
Smooth or tangled, short or long,
Gray or golden, weak or strong.

Turn, turn, O mystic wheel!
Let the coming years reveal
Fiber firm and smoothly rolled,
Endless, gleaming, rich as gold!

THE TEACHER.



WHEN Harold runs away from school,
And steals down to the swimming-pool,
Whom do we hold in ridicule?
The teacher!

If Willie's wild, or Tommie's tame,
Or Ned is nervous, it's a shame!
And who is sure to get the blame?
The teacher!

Who is too lax, or too severe,
Too weak, or prone to rule by fear,
To cranky, notional, or queer?
The teacher!

Who's this on the cartoonist's page,
So lean and sharp and sour with age,
With spectacles and bird and cage?
The teacher!

And when the funny writer folks
Set out the reader's smile to coax,
On whom does Johnnie play the jokes?
The teacher!

And yet when Tommie, Jack and Ned
Have reached the heights, and years have fled,
They find they followed where she led.
The teacher!

Her young heart beats the march of Fate,
Her dreams come true, or soon or late.
She's guardian of the Great White Gate!
The teacher!

THE YOUNG GRADUATE.



HAT visions throng our cob-webbed brains, and
how our hearts dilate,
And how our minds light at the thought of the
young graduate!

What fleecy dreams of angel white, what rib-
bons and what flowers

Are dreamed (not by us men, of course) as we think what once
was ours!

For we've been through it all, and know how rapturous it
seems

To grapple with life's problems close, and settle them—in
dreams!

Her hopes are high, the world is wide, and castles easy-built,
And knights are waiting but the word, all ready for the tilt.

And so she builds her castles so marvelously high

That she has to take the towers off to let the moon go by!

But when the danger's over, wiser far than worldly men,

She takes a saucy look around, and swings them up again!

Don't mind our smiling at your dreams; a smile is not a sneer,

And often when we seem to smile, it's just to hide a tear.

For years ago we builded, too, our castles in the air,

To witness now against us, for their walls are gaunt and bare!

The world needs airy castles, O fair young graduate!

It has too much cement and stone; it's tired of lead and slate.

It wants your morning dreams of hope, like dawns on dewy
flowers,

It likes your castles as they are,—pray don't leave out the
towers!

Keep their white magic in the sky. You'll find that very soon

Their wondrous charm will even change the orbit of the moon!

Be sun and system swept aside; let the red gleam of Mars

Fade from the sky until your towers are crowned by circling
stars!

Then welcome, airy architect of future home and state,

The nation's hope,—but best of all, just "the young graduate!"

THE BOY IN BACK O' ME.



HE boy 'at sits in back o' me at school
He's goody-good, an' learns his joggerfee,
'N he's scared to death fer fear he'll bust a rule.
But teacher don't like me at all, fer, Gee!
When somethin's wrong, why, I get lammed fer
fair,
An' he gets off—because he combs his hair,
The boy in back o' me.

One time we got snowballin', an' at last
We hit "Squint" Blakey's little sister, an' Gee!
I got called down for it, an' when I sassed,
I got it good and proper, an' he went free.
Why, just because 'twas me 'at trun the ball,
They never said a word to him at all,
The boy in back o' me.

Next day I brung a mouse to school, an' just
As they sung "Little Workers," it got out, an' Gee!
You never see such fun! I thought I'd bust!
The kids all hollered an' laffed' an' so did he.
And then I got sent home for pa to trim.
It's funny how she never picks on him,
The boy in back o' me.

An' once when we was studyin' some old stuff,
Us kids we had a circus shootin' wads, but Gee!
Teacher she saw it, and she said, "That's enough!"
An' sent me to the office, and when he
Came in an' asked me who'd been raisin' Ned,
An' who it was 'at spoiled our school, I said,
"The boy in back o' me!"

Once teacher was sick, an' our room had a sub
An' we all yelled an' laffed an' stomped, an' Gee!
She hammered the desk just like she had a club,
An' said 'at she'd have order, or she'd see!
An' say! the boy our teacher says is best,
Why, that day he was worser'n all the rest,
The boy in back o' me!

A MORNING GREETING.



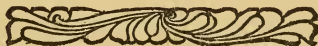
DAY'S tide of gold is over
The fields of purple clover;
Thrill of morning, pulses bounding,
Life is flowing fleet and free!

Dew-glories all a-glitter,
Lark-song and swallow's twitter,
Then the full wood-chorus sounding!
Dawn-song, heart-song, all for thee!

OPTIMISM.



HOUGH all the thousands round us cringe and
scheme,
And trim their conduct to the world's esteem,
One upright man can win us back again.
To hope for justice and believe in men.



DREAM OF A POETASTER.



UST at dusk the other evening, in a warm and
cosy nook,
I was lying in a hammock, drowsing o'er a
weighty book,
Down along the water frontage, near the path
beyond the spring,
Where old Time lays down his sickle, just to watch the ham-
mock swing.

Some folks call it "Poets' Corner," but I've noticed in the past
That the others beat him to it, and the poet gets there last.
And in fact a plain admission here might just as well be made,
That the poets should leave corners strictly to the Board of
Trade.

But this time I tell you of I fared particularly well,
For the boarders quickly vanished when they heard the supper
bell.

I was happy as a mermaid dreaming in a summer sea,
When a messenger arrived to terminate my reverie.
The most autocratic summons I have ever had arrive;
Form of torture, reading poems; hour of execution, five.
Signed, Program Administratrix. Courteous? Yes, but final
too.

I knew better than to argue. That would be my Waterloo.
O for easy-gliding pen, and O for lilt and lure of rhyme!
Just a touch of inspiration, and a glimpse of the sublime!
Then the call would have no terrors; I would seat me at my
desk

And dash off a few bold stanzas, something brisk and Brown-
ingesque.

But this scrap-book stuff before me,—dare I read it when I
think

How my friend, the critic, looked it over with a knowing
wink

And drawled out,—perhaps he's jealous,—"Half are silly, half
are slow,

Half presume your readers shallow, and the rest pronounce
you so!"

"Ah! More fire in my poems? That's the fault, may I inquire?"

"Not precisely. Best reverse it. Put the poems in the fire!"

So, to burn or not to burn them was the question up to me,

As I sat up in the hammock, deep in my perplexity.

"Still," I thought, "it's not till Friday; I can yet enjoy my
book."

So I curled in cosy fashion in my cosy lakeside nook,
Reading of the wondrous doings of the wizards of to-day,
Who have conjured forth the Cosmos hidden in a lump of clay;
How the lightnings at their bidding have descended from the
 skies,

Yielding swift and ready service to the bidding of the wise.
Distance fades at their enchantment; ends of earth are at their
 feet;

Voices from afar they summon, and we hear their accents
 sweet.

They have traced the dance of ions, followed all their mimic
 wars,

Till the wonders in the atom match the glory of the stars.
Long I mused and much I marvelled in the evening's fading
 light,

Till my drowsy fancies blended with the shadows of the night.
Then methought I heard a footstep, and I turned in mild sur-
 prise

To behold the queerest customer that ever met my eyes.
He was hatless, hairless, toothless, he was homely as Old Nick;
One hand held a battered satchel, and the other held a stick.
Bloodless was his cheek and sallow, and his physiog like wood,
So I figured in a jiffy that he lived on breakfast food.
Then he opened up his satchel, and he limbered up his tongue,
And he spouted like a populist that has a leather lung.

"I've a wonderful invention here," he volubly began,
"The most complicated mechanism ever made by man.
It's a triumph of mechanics! Won't it make the nations stare!"
And he placed it near the hammock on—you know that rock-
 ing-chair.

It had wheels and cogs and pinions; it had pulleys, shafts and
 links,
Bolts, eccentrics, screws and fixings wrought in curious curves
 and kinks.

"It's the marvel of the century," said the stranger with a
 squint;

"Double-action, nickel-plated, and to build it cost a mint.
It's my PATENT POETASTER, built to manufacture rhyme.
No need now for inspiration, or for glimpse of the sublime.
Press the button, grab the handle, turn 'em out in any style,
Sonnet, ballad, ode or idyl! This contraption's worth your
 while!

Here's the knob you press for dactyls, this one for the anapest;
Here the trochee; there the spondee; take the one you like the
 best.

Touch this button for the rondeau, pull that lever there below,
And you'll have it, light and airy, graceful, Frenchy, comme
il faut!"

"One thing more," I interjected, "and I'll say the thing makes
good.

Will it write a pompous epic, full of deeds of fire and blood?"

"Easy money," said the stranger. "All the buttons, high and
low,

Fill the reservoir with brimstone, wind it up and let it go."

"Wonderful!" I cried. I need one. I must have the thing at
once.

Now, I'm sure, those poet people won't consider me a dunce!

What's the price you're charging for it? No, I won't buy any
stock."

"Well," he said, "they are not expensive." So I braced me for
a shock.

"We've been making special prices to a few important men,

And I'll sell this for five million,—though it's regularly ten."

"Here's the money. I must have one. Though it certainly
does seem

Rather steep." (I needn't mention this was only in a dream.)

When he left, I tried to work it, but I got a trifle mixed;

All the wheels got buzzing madly, and I couldn't get them
fixed.

I was stricken dumb with terror, and my breath came with a
wheeze,

And I suddenly awakened with a dynamitic sneeze.

In my dizzy brain the vision still was whirling like new wine,

And I heard my valet asking, "Are you ready, sir, to dine?"

As I pulled my wits together, I distinguished false from true;

All a dream the Poetaster,—all a dream the valet, too!

So my bliss took wings and vanished; vanished like the joys
of youth;

Vanished like—I hear you mutter, "Just like his respect for
truth!"

Yet I still insist it vanished, and I murmured in dismay,

"I'm in for it!" adding grimly, "There's one comfort: So are
they!"

"Well," I said, "I'll face the music. And besides, it might be
worse.

Surely they'll respect my courage if they don't admire my
verse!"

LINES WITH A FLOUR-SIFTER.



THESE lines—so you won't fail in catching my drift or

Pronounce me absurd for presenting a sifter.
Don't misunderstand what is meant when I do it,
For it's really not very hard to see through it!

I only request that you will give it a niche in
Some neat little nook of your pantry or kitchen.
And though it is humble, I'd make it the image
Of the fortune I wish you. Now don't start a scrimmage,
For I'll try not to cheat your most fond expectations
If you'll list to the lore of the sifter with patience.
It is true of a sieve,—may your fortune apply it,—
That only the finest things ever get by it,
While the lumps and the humps and the chaff are, perforce,
Held back by its meshes as matters of coarse!
But while sifter fortune I wish you with vim it
Would never quite do if I went to the limit.
For instance, I wouldn't wish fate to bestow
That you'd be perennially needing the dough!
Nay, rather, its products be light, white, and sweet,
And all that comes through be "as good as the wheat."
Should fate take your sieve up to hammer and drum it,
May it be but to jar down some new blessings from it,
For often it happens what seems a rough shaking
Is only a prelude to fortune's best baking.
And so let me end up my good sifter-wishes
By hoping the bakings may all be delicious,—
Your blessings the richest good angels can give,
That the gold of life's harvest may pass through your sieve!



ANTIETAM.



HE brown Antietam's flood sweeps on between
The hills, ripe-harvested and calm as lay
In the cool, placid dawnlight of that day
When golden stubble-slope and glistening green
Of woods and verdurous cornfields spread serene,
Ere storm of battle burst, or crimson fray
Had folded a remorseful shroud of gray
To hide the ensanguined horror of the scene.

Many the years since that September morn,
From which, across the gulf, an influence thrills
My heart; not of wild battle-thunders born,
Long cavern-chained since rock-quakes forged these hills;
Rather, cold silence, the dim stars, the sight
Of death-blanchéd faces upturned to the night.

SONG.



NFOLD thy pinions, wonder-winged song,
And raise the soul to rapture tears and love!
Spring like the lark to the blue dome above,
And float in fervid fellowship among
The stars of dawn; or darkly droop along
The suffering earth in pity, like a dove.
Such grandeur and such gloom I knew not of
Till in my heart thy accents woke the throng
Of gracious voices, for 'twas at thy call
A myriad yearning echoes dungeoned in
Its unsuspected caverns wild and deep
Trooped forth to freedom from their silent thrall.
And equal boons I count that thou dost win
My eyes to joy, and teach them how to weep.

A SERENADE.



ERE mine the fabled fairy power
To order glows and gleams,
What wondrous visions should attend
On Desdemona's dreams!

Moonbeamy midnight should yield up
Her silver and her pearl,
And all the flowers of fairy fields
Their brightest blooms unfurl.

Such angel harmonies as once
Through Eden grandly rolled
Should sweep in stately symphonies
Above her curls of gold.

And hopeless though my wish might be
That I one dream should share,
I yet could stand afar content
To know her dreams were fair.

SPRING BANK.



SPRING gushed down from a daisied slope
By the mystiered marge of a silent wood;
Beside it sat the white angel Hope,
And Faith on guard in his armor stood.

A child with a cup of gold knelt there,
And offered a draught to the passers-by;
Who drank waxed strong, and his world grew fair;
We know, for we quaffed of it, you and I.

UNDER THE BLOSSOMS.



RING stately lily and violet dim,
Rare pansy and cowslip, rose and rue;
Bring scented sedge from the brooklet's brim,
And the evening primrose wet with dew.

Lay flower on flower; but the sweet pale rose
That lies beneath them is fairer far,
For their petals drift where the west wind blows,
And the light of her bloom is a living star.

EMBER-DREAMS.



ISE in the embers to-night,
Dream-castles stately and fair,
On whose turrets there glows,
Like the blush of the rose,
A dream-glory, radiant and rare.

Come from the slumberland shore,
Dream-spirits, come from afar,
Over seas ever bright
With the beautiful light
That beams from the beautiful star.

Still all the strife in my breast,
Griefs and regrettings beguile,
Come and soothe my sad heart
Till its sorrow and smart
Fade away in the bliss of your smile.

Lay thy soft hand on my brow,
Poppy-crowned angel of sleep,
And my eyelids shall close
Like the sun-weary rose
When night dews steal in from the deep.

THE DREAM.



POET dreamt a dream so frail,
So flowery-fragile, and so fair,
Well might his raptured soul despair
To paint such glories ere they pale.

About him adamantine towers,
Proud pyramids, and walls of brass
Sublimely watched the ages pass,
Rock-based against the fleeting hours.

Those towers, a thousand years ago,
Time's flood engulfed; but that frail dream
Blooms on the bosom of the stream
Like dew-pearled lotus in the dawn.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.



SILVERED with moonlight pale,
Goblin and fairy frail
Thy rule proclaim.
Visions of fairyland,
Hovel and palace grand,

Wood sprite and elfin band
Rise at thy name.

No crown is on thy brow,
Yet happy children bow
And tribute bring;
And still as years depart,
Weaver of dreams, thy art
Sways every youthful heart
To own thee king.

THE STARS ABOVE THE PINES.



WHEN the city's clash and clamor,
Roar of wheel, and clank of hammer
Die with dusk, and daylight's glamour
With the fading day declines,
Fancy wakes to life, and flinging
Airy pinions wide, goes winging
Where the whippoorwill is singing
To the stars above the pines.

Where the feathery ferns are sleeping,
Where the tender dewes are weeping,
Where the timid buds are peeping
In the forest's dim confines,
Where the drowsy brook is dreaming
Of the moon above it beaming,
And its waters catch the gleaming
Of the stars above the pines.

And in thought I follow, follow,
Swifter than the homing swallow,
Far through leafy haunt and hollow,
Where the festooned ivy twines;
And as day grows dim and dimmer,
And the glooms of twilight glimmer,
Solace seeks me in the shimmer
Of the stars above the pines.

WITH A CUP—TO A COUPLE.



HAVE sought a charm
To avert all harm,
And keep Fortune's knees forever supple,
And there's nothing I know
That's more apropos
Than a loving cup for a loving couple!

LITTLE MARY.



HOUGH your playmates call you simply
Little Mary,
Dainty maid, demure and dimply,
You're a fairy,
Standing at the window there,
With the glint and gold of rare
April sunshine in your hair,
Little Mary.

Now, as twinkling through your glances
Little Mary,
Just a hint of mischief dances,
Lips of cherry
Part, and daintily disclose
Little teeth in pearly rows.
You're a darling, goodness knows!
Little Mary!

Now your smile gives way to pity,
Little Mary,
At imagined woes of kitty
Or canary.
April's dower is with you yet,
Bless you! for your eyes are wet,
Little April violet,
Little Mary!

Though with smiles and tears together,
Little Mary,
You have moods like April weather,
Grave or airy,
Yet a closer look describes
Placid deeps in your blue eyes
Calm as April's bluest skies,
Little Mary.

And, at times, a grace diviner,
 Little Mary,
Almost makes your glance a shrine or
 Sanctuary.
And I've never understood
Why your smile in such a mood
Makes it easier to be good,
 Little Mary.

But the sun itself seems brighter,
 Little Mary,
And I find the load is lighter
 That I carry,
And I just take heart anew
When I get a glimpse of you,
With those earnest eyes of blue,
 Little Mary.

Ways more weary than you know of,
 Little Mary,
Wind from April to the snow of
 January.
Lonely vigils, burning sun,
Paths to seek, and snares to shun,
Gird the goal that must be won,
 Little Mary.

But o'er dolly's cradle bending,
 Little Mary,
Deft imagination lending
 Visionary
Grace and glamour as you play,
You have fairy wings today
That no weariness can weigh,
 Little Mary.

May your fancies thus forever,
Little Mary,
Keep you close, and leave you never
Solitary!
Life has nothing wisdom deems
Half so true, and naught that gleams
Half so fair as childhood's dreams,
Little Mary!

IN A "FIRST COPY."



JUST a weed by the garden walk it seems,
Withered and flowerless, waiting the snows;
Yet with gleams of a golden June in its dreams,
When the gardener's hand made it bloom like a
rose!

TO THE "SMILE-A-WHILES."



CAMP Smile-a-While,
I like your style,
I like the sunshine of your smile,
Your friendly welcome, frank and free,
Your woodsy hospitality!

Though many a mile
Divide us, I'll
Not soon forget Camp Smile-a-While!



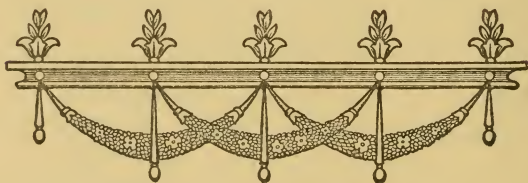
STAR-DREAMS.



DEEP beyond the purple twilight,
Out across the gathering dark,
Somewhere in the mists and shadows
Waits for us our phantom bark;
And when stars in silver splendor

Touch the waves with trembling beams,
White enchanted sails shall waft us
To our dreamland's isle of dreams.

Isle of dreams! that spreads before us
All our eyes had longed to see,
All the paths we fain had followed,
All our hearts had hoped to be;
Till the hopes long ceased from soaring
Spread their pinions as of old,
And again our flaming fancies
Sweep the skies on plumes of gold!





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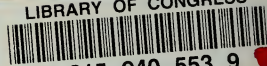
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